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SC THROWS OUT CURATIVE PETITION OF VODA, AIRTEL OVER MEGA DUES

The court dismissed pleas by Vodafone Idea, Bharti Airtel and others, seeking correction of alleged errors in the Adjusted Gross Revenue

COURT'S BLOW COULD LAND TELCOS IN THE RED

The court order will be a big blow to the telcos, especially Vodafone Idea, which analysts warned could face a financial crisis in the absence of AGR relief. The telecom companies had moved the Supreme Court claiming there were several errors in the government's calculation of Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR) dues. The court dismissed the plea in 2021 after which the curative pleas were filed

NO MORE DISPUTES OVER AGR, COMPANIES TOLD

- Vodafone-Idea's liability is ₹58,254 cr and that of Airtel's is ₹43,980 cr. The dues are currently on moratorium till September 2025 as part of a government relief package for the telcos approved in 2021 | **P13**
- Dismissing the curative pleas, the top court said telecom companies shall not raise any dispute and there shall not be any re-assessment

25 years

HOW LONG IT WOULD TAKE VI TO ORGANICALLY PAY ITS DUES AS PER ANALYSIS BY MACQUARIE

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

CHEPAUK SIZZLES

R Ashwin walked to bat when India were struggling at 144/6. Along with Ravindra Jadeja he rebuilt the innings and scored his sixth Test ton to take India to 339/6 at the end of the day one against Bangladesh in Chennai on Thursday | ASHWIN PRASATH | **P17**

India rubbishes Pannun lawsuit as unwarranted

PM's meeting with Trump not firmed up yet, says foreign secretary

YESHI SELI @ New Delhi

FOREIGN Secretary Vikram Misri on Thursday dismissed imputations in a civil lawsuit filed by Khalistani separatist Gurpatwant Singh Pannun against the Indian government and National Security Advisor Ajit Doval in an American court ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's US visit. The case pertains to the alleged attempt to bump him off by a hired gunman. The court issued summons and sought a response within 21 days.

The foreign secretary described Pannun's allegations as "unwarranted and unsubstantiated, adding "it doesn't change our views about the underlying situation." Misri said Pannun's antecedants are well known.

"I would also like to underline the fact that this person represents an organisation which is unlawful and has been declared as such under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act of 1967 and it has been done so on account of its involvement in anti-national and subversive activities aimed at disrupting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of India," Misri added.

Gurpatwant Singh Pannun

As for the buzz on Modi meeting former US President Donald Trump, Misri said it has not been firmed up yet. A couple of days ago, Trump had said he was looking forward to meeting Modi during the visit. "PM Modi is a fantastic man and is coming to meet me next week," he had said.

"We are currently trying to schedule several meetings of the prime minister, based on the time available. At this moment I cannot specifically tell you whether meetings have been fixed or not. We are looking from all viewpoints, considering how much time we have with whom the meetings can be arranged. We will update once they are fixed," Misri said.

Regarding the Quad summit, he said, all regional, international, geopolitical situations will be on the agenda and the essence from the discussions will be reflected in the joint statement. "All key challenges confronting the international community on development, peace, security will be discussed."

The PM will depart on September 21 and his first engagement is the Quad Summit at Delaware. The White House said China will be high on the agenda of the summit.

NO BILATERAL WITH YUNUS

Modi will have a number of bilateral meetings with world leaders, but not with the head of the interim govt in Bangladesh, Muhammad Yunus. Besides, Ukrainian President Volodomyr Zelenskyy has not requested a meeting with the prime minister, says MEA

DIASPORA DIALOGUE

On Sept 22, Modi will attend a diaspora event at Nassau Coliseum in New York. Arrangements for this event has been made privately, so there is no clarity on who all will be invited. Next day, Modi will address the Summit of the Future at New York

K'taka mulls 6 days a year period leave

S LALITHA & BANSY KALAPPA @ Bengaluru

THE Karnataka Government is set to introduce paid menstrual leave of six days annually for women, in both the private and public sectors. This follows a report submitted to the government by a panel constituted to look into it.

"A team headed by Dr Sapna Mukherjee was constituted, which has submitted the report to the government. We will hold discussions with all the concerned departments. It will next be placed before the Legislature for its consent," Labour Secretary Mohammed Mohsin told *TNIE*. Karnataka plans to introduce this move first for the private sector, and make it mandatory in government departments after it is made a policy, he added. Mohsin said this was in line with a Supreme Court order calling for the need to have a policy in place on the issue.

In July this year, the SC had asked the Centre to frame a model policy on period leave for female staff. It had also stated that making it mandatory for employers to grant such leave would become counterproductive for women and their participation in the workforce. **P5**

Now, MLA Munirathna booked for rape, threats

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

A 40-year-old woman has filed a rape case against BJP MLA **Munirathna**. In her complaint with the Kaggalipura police of Ramanagara district on Wednesday, the woman has also alleged that the MLA was using women infected with HIV to honey-trap his rivals.

The police recorded her statement before a magistrate, under Section 164 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPc) and also conducted the mahazar, on Thursday.

This is the third FIR against the BJP MLA from Rajarajeshwari Nagar Assembly constituency in a week. He was earlier booked for allegedly threatening a Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) contractor and making insulting remarks against people belonging to the Scheduled Castes. He was arrested in connection with the atrocities case on Saturday, in which he got bail on Thursday.

The rape case was filed by a social worker, accusing the MLA, along with his associates Vijaya Kumar, Sudhakara, Kiran Kumar, Lohith Gowda, Manjunath, and Loki, of sexual assault, blackmail and harassment. The woman, a resident of Muthyala Nagar, has accused the MLA of repeatedly raping and threatening her. **P4**

'DENOTIFICATION SCAM'

CONG MINISTERS SEEK RESIGNATION OF HDK, BSY

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

WITH the opposition BJP and JDS demanding Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's resignation in the Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) case, his cabinet colleagues have turned the tables by raising a decade-old case. They have alleged that Union Minister for Steel and Heavy Industries HD Kumaraswamy and former chief minister BS Yediyurappa are involved in illegal denotification of Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) land. It eventually benefited Kumaraswamy's family members – mother-in-law and brother-in-law – the ministers alleged.

Even as there was no evidence of Siddaramaiah's involvement in the allotment of 14 sites by MUDA to his wife Parvathi, and everything is being done legally, opposition parties have projected it as a scam. Yediyurappa and Kumaraswamy are directly involved in the denotification of prime land, alleged Revenue Minister **Krishna Byre Gowda**, Health and Family Welfare Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao and Labour Minister Santhosh Lad.

Addressing a joint press conference, they sought an explanation from Yediyurappa and Kumaraswamy and urged them to resign from their posts. They said that since the Karnataka High Court had rejected Yediyurappa's petition to quash the case in 2021, besides imposing a penalty of Rs 25,000, the Lokayukta should resume investigation.

Asked whether the Congress is raising the old case as part of its political vendetta, Byre Gowda shot back saying "shouldn't the legality of old cases be questioned?" He said the Lokayukta should have called Yediyurappa and Kumaraswamy after the Karnataka HC rejected the petition of the former to quash the case in 2021.

Byre Gowda said that Urban Development principal secretary Jyothi Ramalingam had categorically rejected the file seeking denotification of 1.11 acres of land on Survey nos 7/1B, 7/1C and 7/1 D at Gangenahalli (Matadahalli continued extension) in the heart of Bengaluru city.

On October 9, 2007, the day Kumaraswamy resigned from the CM's post, Jyothi had clarified that once the notification of 16/2 was issued, land cannot be denotified, Krishna Byre Gowda pointed out.

CONTINUED ON P4

FATF red-flags India's low conviction rate

DIPAK MONDAL @ New Delhi

PARIS-based Financial Action Task Force has asked India to reduce the number of pending trials in money laundering cases. In its mutual evaluation report released on Thursday, the money laundering and terror financing watchdog said India must increase conviction-based confiscations.

The report notes that the Enforcement Directorate has made non-conviction based seizures to the tune of ₹16,497 crore from FY19 to FY23, while confiscations based on convictions were worth ₹39 crore. During the five-year period, the ED started 4,163 investigations, of which 28 cases ended in conviction. In 132 cases, the ED decided to not probe further.

According to the report, the number of investigations has been increasing but the number of prosecution complaints has not kept pace. To increase the rate of conviction, the FATF suggested that India enhance resourcing for ED and specialised courts to be able to swiftly conclude pending prosecutions and sustain timely investigation, prosecution, and conviction.

The evaluation report praises India for its "strong provisional measures for depriving criminals from the benefits of their crimes and helping prevent asset flight through the attachment (seizure) of proceeds of crime". It also notes that India seizes large amounts of proceeds and instrumentalities associated with crimes that are not prioritised for money laundering investigations.

Vivek Aggarwal, additional secretary (revenue) in the Ministry of Finance, said India has been placed in 'regular follow-up', which is the highest rating category by FATF. The UK, France and Italy are the only other G-20 countries that have been placed in this category.

According to the report, India has fully complied with 37 out of 40 recommendations for curbing money laundering and terror financing.

FATF mutual evaluations are in-depth country reports analysing the implementation and effectiveness of measures to combat money laundering and terror financing.

MONEY LAUNDERING INVESTIGATIONS

CATEGORY	2018-2019	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-Oct 23
• Probe launched	195	562	981	1,180	1,245
• Cases where decision was taken not to probe	39	17	12	18	46
• Prosecution complaints filed	216	51	130	144	323
• Cases convicted	4	4	1	3	16
• Cases acquitted	1	0	0	0	0

EXPRESS READ

Union min Bittu booked for remarks on Rahul

BENGALURU: An FIR has been registered against Union minister Ravneet Singh Bittu for calling Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi as "terrorist". The case was registered by the High Grounds police here | **P10**

Fire in Ramaiah Hosp, 1 dies of panic

BENGALURU: A fire broke out in the Cardiac Intensive Care Unit (CICU) located on the third floor of Ramaiah Memorial Hospital in Sanjaynagar, on Thursday afternoon. It is learnt that a 35-year-old businessman from Kerala, undergoing treatment for pneumonia at the hospital, died of panic | **P3**

Hell Paths

Risking life and limb

At least 45% of road deaths are of pedestrians who are forced to walk on roads due to absence of footpaths, say experts. The govt and its agencies are also responsible for encroaching footpaths by setting up toilets, drinking water plants, transformers, traffic kiosks etc | **P2**

WITH THIS ISSUE

CITY'S BEST WEEKEND GUIDE INDULGE 42 PAGES, INCLUDING 24 OF INDULGE

Jr docs relent, agree to join emergency duty

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Kolkata

JUNIOR doctors in West Bengal, who were protesting for the past few weeks over the brutal rape-murder of a resident doctor at R G Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata, have decided to resume emergency services from Saturday. However, the trainee doctors stressed that they have not called off their protest seeking justice for their colleague and will not join duty in the OPDs across government hospitals.

"We are withdrawing our cease work partially," said a doctor. Before partially lifting their sit-in protest, the doctors plan to hold a march from Swasthya Bhawan, the state health department headquarters, to CBI office at Salt Lake area. Earlier in the day, the doctors submitted a draft of the key points discussed in the meeting they had with government officials on Wednesday, to Chief Secretary Manoj Pant. The draft, detailing the points which were taken up agreed upon by the two sides and also those which weren't, was sent so that the government may issue directives.

EAR TO THE GROUND

Addressing Lankan democracy deficit, graft as important as economy

DILRUKSHI HANDUNNETTI

Award-winning journalist and lawyer, founder and director of the Colombo-based Center for Investigative Reporting (CIR)

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka's economic crisis is directly linked to its governance crisis, and unless accountability issues, including corruption and democracy deficit, are addressed, the island may not be in a position to overcome its current challenges, subject experts say.

As Sri Lanka goes to polls on September 21, poor governance remains a key concern.

To restore public trust and to change the country's trajectory, a few measures must be taken in the first 100 days of a new presidency, including the abolition of executive presidency, steps to return to a parliamentary system and create the post of independent public prosecution, says Dr Paikiasothy Saravanamuttu, internationally renowned rights advocate, Executive Director of the Colombo-based Centre for Policy Alternatives and Co-Convenor of the Center for Monitoring Election Violence.

Addressing governance concerns are as critical as economic reforms and relief to the people, he says. "The 2024 presidential election is not about selecting the best formula for economic revival. The IMF diagnostic report and a Sri Lankan civil society study have both identified systemic corruption as a significant malaise. The 2022 people's movement was not just a reaction to the economic crisis but more of a reaction to the governance crisis. People called for an end to corruption, to drive corrupt politicians home, to create a meritocracy. Curbing corruption is at the centre of any future solution," adds Dr Saravanamuttu.

Saliya Peiris, PC, former president of the Bar Association of Sri Lanka, says, democracy and governance are tied to sustainable development.

CONTINUED ON: P9

National People's Power's presidential candidate Anura Kumara Dissanayaka (3L), greets Buddhist monks during a rally in Colombo ahead of the Sept 21 poll | AFP